



Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra

# Newsletter

Issue no.45

June 2017

## Next Concert:

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 8:00 pm**  
**Our Lady & St Michael's Church,**  
**Abergavenny.**

**Guest Conductor: Michael Bell**

Programme:

- Sibelius – Finlandia
- Sibelius – Valse Triste
- Shostakovich – Jazz Suite no.2
- Tchaikovsky – Suite No. 3

Tickets available in advance from  
'Abergavenny Music' and online at  
[www.abergavennysymph.org.uk](http://www.abergavennysymph.org.uk)

Our Guest conductor this term, Michael Bell says,

*"The invitation to conduct this concert of the Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra came out of the blue, and I was very flattered and honoured to have been asked. I have greatly enjoyed meeting the orchestra and working on this challenging programme.*

*We used to play Sibelius's Finlandia regularly in my school orchestra in Neath....the number of years ago escapes me now....! At its heart is a great and unforgettable tune, and no wonder its popularity and fervour continues to resonate with audiences today. More characteristic of Sibelius is the haunting Valse Triste that I remember conducting only once before on a snowy winter's night in Cardiff thirty years ago!*

*It's difficult to reconcile that the Dmitri Shostakovich who wrote symphonies full of bitter introspection, and hollow triumph, with the same Dmitri Shostakovich who played piano for silent films and had an enduring love of light music. The Suite for Variety Stage Orchestra is a work full of joy and wit, and I dare the audience not to smile at its infectious bonhomie!*

*Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 used to be very popular with audiences, most notably for the Theme & Variations movement with its virtuoso solo for the leader of the orchestra, a solo that Sophie plays beautifully. The work is unfairly neglected in concerts, but there are a number of notable recordings available. I first got to know the work in Sir Adrian Boult's 1974 recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. A classic recording indeed. This is the first time I have conducted Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 and it has been a great pleasure for me to have performed it with the Abergavenny Symphony Orchestra. Thank you for making this possible.*

*All Good Wishes, Michael."*



## Calendar

### Autumn Concert 2017:

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017, 8:00 pm  
Our Lady & St Michael's Church, Abergavenny.  
Conductor: Dennis Simons  
Programme:

- Shostakovich – Festive Overture
- Berlioz – Benvenuto Cellini Overture
- Rodrigo – Guitar Concerto
- Sibelius – Symphony No. 5

### AGM:

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

### Concert for Children 2017:

Sunday \*10<sup>th</sup> December 2017 (\* tbc)  
Guest Conductor: Michael Bell

### Orchestral Workshop:

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
Clarence Hall, Crickhowell  
Conductor: Dennis Simons



## Guest Conductors:

**Michael Bell** has been working with us this term while Dennis takes a break to visit his family abroad. A number of our members already knew Michael as he conducts Brecknock Sinfonia, and we were pleased when he accepted our invitation to be our guest conductor for our summer concert. Michael approaches rehearsals with seriousness, but also with a smile on his face and we hope that we will do his work justice in our concert on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

As Michael was unable to take 2 of this term's rehearsals due to previous commitments, the committee decided to ask **Chris Holley** to fill in. Chris approached the orchestra to ask if there was any opportunity of working with us to gain more experience. He is a graduate of Birmingham University who already has quite an impressive CV. He will be moving to Cardiff this summer to begin a masters degree in orchestral conducting at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. We have been pleased with his work this term and hope to invite him back if we need a cover for rehearsals in the future.

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## Members and Other Players

It was a huge shock to us all when Alice contacted us to inform us of the sudden death of her father, **Ivor Cox**, who was a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> violins. Ivor had been playing with us just the previous evening. His energy, enthusiasm and ability will be greatly missed, and our thoughts and condolences are with his family in their tragic loss.



**Alice Cox** (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) herself will be leaving us this summer. She is sitting her A levels at the moment and plans to work in the school at which her mother teaches for the next two years before going on to university. Alice has been a great asset to the orchestra with her

accomplished playing and her enthusiasm and we shall miss her very much. All the best for the future, Alice!

**Jan Cormie** (viola) hasn't been able to make rehearsals recently due to illness, but we wish her a good recovery and look forward to her return.

We wish **Lynne Pollitt** (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) the best of luck with her forthcoming Grade 7 exam.

**Diana Turnbull** (2<sup>nd</sup> violin) has kept this news fairly quiet, but she took her Grade 8 exam this year and passed with merit. Congratulations, Diana.

**Pete Geraghty** was our own soloist at the last concert and he has this to say: *"It was an exhilarating experience for me to have the opportunity to perform a piece which I had first learned in 1973 but had never performed in public. Playing as a soloist is a different kind of music making. I was privileged to get the chance, and very grateful for the marvellous support from Dennis and the orchestra. The tremendous warmth of the audience response at the end was truly touching and unforgettable."*

We are pleased to have given this opportunity to Pete and are glad that he enjoyed it so much.

We are delighted to welcome several new members to the orchestra....

- **Jon Mudd** (trumpet) – following in Paul Kelly's footsteps as a convert from cornet playing - in Jon's case, locally with the Borough Band. Having enjoyed the Mahler 2 workshop, he decided to take up the chair that Paul vacated.
- **Salvatore Frusteri** (trombone) – having played with Mark in South Powys, Salvo has now joined ASO and gives us (at last!) a full brass section.
- **Kim Mather** (violin) – Kim first played with us in rehearsals for the Shostakovich workshop in 2016 but time pressures stopped her joining us more regularly. We're very pleased she's now able to become a member.
- **Rachel Stublely** (violin) – Rachel played with us in the String Workshop last autumn and again in the Mahler 2 workshop, and has now succumbed to Diana's persuasive charm and joined us!